

## **Giving Her Away by darthstormer**

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**Summary:** He had given her away once before. Now Hopper faces the prospect of giving Jane away once more. Sentimental One-Shot

## **Giving Her Away**

He had given her away once before, and it had quite possibly been the lowest point in his entire life. He had barely known her, of course, but it hadn't made the action any less despicable. He had every intention of getting her back and hidden somewhere safe before everything fell apart, but that had done little to offset the guilt he had carried around ever since. Long after she had forgiven him for his actions that terrible night, the memory still had a way of sneaking up and stirring the guilt to a roiling boil once more.

Now, Chief Hopper faced the prospect of giving her away once more. Once again, a man desired to have her for his very own. This time, however, everything was different. She was no longer a frightened little girl, longing for love and protection, but a strong and confident woman ready to face the world on her own two feet. She was not garbed in a hand-me-down pink dress streaked with mud and salt and blood, but rather an exquisite gown of pure white. No longer was she wrapped in his old flannel jacket, though she wore on her wrist something old and blue and borrowed from him. And the man was not a psychotic monster who wanted to exploit everything that made her special for his own devious ends. Instead, it was the young man who cherished and adored her very essence.

The last time he faced this dilemma, he had been beaten and electrocuted into submission. This time, the decision came willingly, and he found himself wondering, "Why does it hurt so much more?" He knew why, of course. She had been a stranger then, with the misfortune of coming into his life at a time when he vowed to never let anyone into his heart again. In the end, she had found her way in all the same, and brought the self-destructive cynic back to life. They may not have been bound by blood, but he was every bit her father. It came thirteen years later than it should, but he had been the one to finally bring her into the world. They had faced countless challenges, screaming arguments, shattered windows and shattered hearts. In spite of the rocky road they had traveled, or perhaps because of it, she was his everything - his very reason for being - and today she was leaving him.

He knew that wasn't the right way to look at it, but the growing hole in his heart felt that way. He was ready to start throwing punches if another person told him that he wasn't losing a daughter, but gaining a son. As far as he was concerned, Mike Wheeler had been like a son for years already. Hell, he had already fallen head-over-heels for his Jane before Hopper ever even met the girl; not at all the order things are normally supposed to go. Mike, the boy who at thirteen was ready to throw a punch at him in defense of her. The day has been coming for years now, but it feels like a punch to the gut all the same.

She stands before him now, an angel in glowing white. She made him promise not to cry because she knew it would make her own tears would fall. Down the aisle they walk, unsure of who is supporting whom more. There stands Mike, tuxedo crisp and black, anxiously waiting, his eyes seeing nothing but her. They reach the front, before family and friends, and he raises her veil.

Leaning in, he kisses her cheek and whispers, "I love you, Jane."

"I love you too, Daddy" she whispers in return.

The minister begins, and he knows the moment is coming. He had given her away once before and it had nearly killed him. But today, everything was different. And the moment arrived.

"Who gives this woman to be wed to this man?" the minister asked.

"Her father does."